

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are now present in this application.

Claims 1 and 15 have been amended, and claims 22-26 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 15, 18, 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by RADENS, U.S. Patent 6,265,279. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-6, 10-12 and 14 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over RADENS. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 7, 9, 13, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over RADENS in view of MANDELMAN, U.S. Patent 6,163,045. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 8 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over RADENS in view of BECKER, U.S. Patent 4,782,036. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that the Examiner considers claims 25 and 26 to contain allowable subject matter. Without conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but simply to expedite prosecution of the present application, it is noted that the limitations of objected-to but allowable claim 25 have been incorporated into independent claim 1, and the limitations of objected-to but allowable claim 26 have been

incorporated into independent claim 15. Accordingly, in view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that all claims should now be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(b) and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

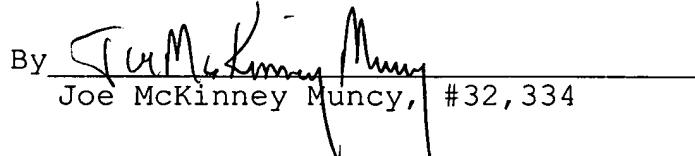
In the event the Examiner does not consider this application to be in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purposes of Appeal. This Amendment should overcome the current grounds of rejection and therefore simplify the issues for Appeal. Nonetheless, it should be unnecessary to proceed to Appeal because the instant application should now be in condition for allowance.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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